

Application No. 09/816,227

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An image storage comprising:

a memory that stores a plurality of digital image data provided by a plurality of image providers,

a recorder that records ~~the~~ a history of use by a plurality of image users with respect to each of the digital image data; and

*AND CONTROLLING RATE
AMOUNT OF SPACE OR
NUMBER OF DIGITAL IMAGE
DATA FOR EACH PROVIDER.*
a controller that controls a condition for each image provider in storing the digital image ~~by designating at least one of an amount of space or a number of digital image data each image provider may store in the memory in accordance with the recorder history of use by the plurality of image users with respect to each of the digital image data.~~
AND DEPENDENT UPON THE

2. (Original) The image storage according to claim 1, wherein the condition for each image provider is the number of the digital image data that the image provider is entitled to store in the memory.

3. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 1, wherein the recorder is designed to record ~~at~~ the number of orders from the image users for each of the digital image data.

4. (Original) The image storage according to claim 3, wherein the controller is designed to control the condition for each image provider in accordance with the number of orders in a predetermined period for the digital image data stored by the image provider.

5. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 4, wherein the condition for each image provider is the number of the digital image data that the ~~creator~~ image provider is entitled to store in the memory.

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6. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 5, wherein the controller is designed to increase the number of the digital image data for the image provider if the number of ~~the orders~~ for the digital image data of the image provider increases.

7. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 5, wherein the controller is designed to decrease the number of the digital image data for the image provider if the number of ~~the orders~~ for the digital image data of the image provider decreases.

8. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 1, further comprising a searcher that searches the memory for digital image data fulfilling a given condition relates to ~~set on~~ the history recorded by the recorder.

9. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 8, wherein the given condition ~~is set on~~ relates to the number of orders from the image users for each of the digital image data recorded by the recorder.

10. (Original) The image storage according to claim 9, wherein the given condition is that the number of orders for the digital image data is greater than a given number, whereby a popular digital image data fulfils the condition.

11. (Original) The image storage according to claim 9, wherein the given condition is that the number of orders for the digital image data is less than a given number, whereby an unappreciated digital image data fulfils the condition.

12. (Currently Amended) The image storage according to claim 8, wherein the given condition is set on the image provider ~~with the condition in storing the digital image~~.

13. (Original) The image storage according to claim 12, wherein the given condition is that the number of the digital image data that the image provider is entitled to store in the memory is greater than a given number, whereby a digital image data provided by a popular image provider fulfils the condition.

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14. (Original) The image storage according to claim 12, wherein the given condition is that the number of the digital image data that the image provider is entitled to store in the memory is less than a given number, whereby a digital image data provided by a fresh image provider fulfils the condition.

15. (Previously Presented) The image storage according to claim 1, further comprising printed matter production system that makes use of the digital image data in the memory for a production of printed matter.

16. (Original) The image storage according to claim 15, wherein the printed matter production system includes an acceptor that accepts from an image user a designation of a set of digital image data for an order of printed matter.

17. (Original) The image storage according to claim 16, wherein the printed matter production system further includes a selector that selects a type of printer suitable for individual production of the printed matter.

18. (Original) The image storage according to claim 15, wherein the printed matter production system includes a proposer that proposes a plurality of optional digital image data for selection by a plurality of potential image users for calendar, an acceptor that accepts the selections by the potential image users, and a decider that decides to realize a mass production of printed matter in accordance with the accepted selections.

19. (Previously Presented) The image storage according to claim 18, wherein the printed matter production system further includes a selector that selects a type of printer suitable for mass production of the printed matter.

20. (Previously Presented) The image storage according to claim 1, further comprising a selector that selects one of a plurality of types of printers for producing a print of a digital image data in accordance with an order from an image user.

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21. (Original) The image storage according to claim 20, wherein the selector is designed to select the printer between a first type of printer suitable for individual production of the print of a digital image data and a second type of printer suitable for mass production of the print of the digital image data in accordance with the number of orders for producing prints of the digital image data from the image users.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating the circulation of digital image data stored in a memory comprising the steps of:

storing digital image data of a plurality of image providers in the memory;
informing a plurality of image users of the digital image data;
accepting orders from an image user for a digital image data;
recording ~~the-a~~ history of the orders for each digital image data; and
controlling a condition for each image provider in storing the digital image in accordance with the history of the orders for the digital image data of the image provider by designating at least one of an amount of space or a number of digital images each image provider may store in the memory based on the history of the orders.

23. (Original) The method according to claim 22, wherein the condition for each image provider is the number of the digital image data that the image provider is entitled to store in accordance with the number of orders accepted in a predetermined period for the digital image data of the image provider.

24. (Currently Amended) An image storage comprising:
a memory that stores a plurality of digital image data provided by a plurality of image providers;
a recorder that records ~~the-a~~ history of use by a plurality of image users with respect to each of the digital image data; and

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a searcher that searches the memory for a digital image data fulfilling a given condition set on the history recorded by the recorder.

25. (Original) The image storage according to claim 24, wherein the given condition is set on the number of orders from the image users for each of the digital image data recorded by the recorder.

26. (Original) The image storage according to claim 25, wherein the given condition is set on a relationship between the number of orders for the digital image data and a given number, whereby a digital image data is searched for depending on the popularity of the digital image data.

27. (Original) The image storage according to claim 24, wherein the given condition is set on the image provider with the condition in storing the digital image.

28. (Original) The image storage according to claim 27, wherein the given condition is set on a relationship between the number of digital image data that the image provider is entitled to store in the memory and a given number, whereby a digital image data is searched for depending on the popularity of the image provider who stores the image.

29. (Currently Amended) An image storage comprising:
a memory that stores a plurality of digital image data provided by a plurality of image providers;

a recorder that records the-a history of use by a plurality of image users with respect to each of the digital image data; and

a selector that selects one of a plurality of types of printers for producing a print of a digital image data in accordance with an order from an image user.

30. (Original) The image storage according to claim 29, wherein the selector is designed to select the printer between a first type of printer suitable for individual production of the print of a digital image data and a second type of printer suitable for mass production of

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the print of the digital image data in accordance with the number of orders for producing prints of the digital image data from the image users.

31. (Previously Presented) A method of producing printed matter from a plurality of digital image data stored in a memory comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of digital image data in the memory;

proposing a plurality of optional digital image data for selection by a plurality of potential image users for printed matter;

accepting the selections by the potential image users; and

deciding on a mass production of printed matter in accordance with the accepted selections.

32. (Original) The method according to claim 31, further comprising a step of informing the potential image users of preparatory proposals of the digital image data and a step of hearing responses thereto from the potential image users, the proposing step being conducted in accordance with the responses.

33. (Original) The method according to claim 31, wherein a plurality of groups of digital image data are proposed in the proposing step, and wherein selections of one digital image data from every group are accepted in the accepting step.

34. (Previously Presented) A method of producing printed matter from a plurality of digital image data stored in a memory comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of digital image data in the memory;

proposing a plurality of groups of optional digital image data for selection by a plurality of image users for printed matter;

accepting the selections of one digital image data from every group by each image user; and

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producing printed matter for each image user in accordance with the selections, respectively.

35. (Previously Presented) A method of producing printed matter from a plurality of digital image data stored in a memory comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of digital image data in the memory;

proposing a plurality of groups of optional digital image data for selection by a plurality of image users for printed matter;

accepting the selections of one digital image data from every group by each image user;

informing each image user of the total result of the selections by the image users; and

allowing each image user to change the selection in view of the informed total result.

36. (Previously Presented) A printed matter producing system comprising:

a container including a plurality of groups of sub-containers each keeping a plurality of sheets of print produced on one image source, respectively;

a selector that selects one sheet from a sub-container of every group, respectively, the option of the sub-container among every group being dependent on an order by an image user for printed matter; and

a binder that binds the selected sheets into printed matter.

37. (Original) A method of producing a product from a plurality of elements comprising the steps of:

proposing a plurality of optional elements for selection by a plurality of potential users;

accepting the selections by the potential users; and

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deciding on a mass production of the product in accordance with the accepted selections.

38. (Original) The method according to claim 37, wherein a plurality of groups of elements are proposed in the proposing step, and wherein selections of one element from every group are accepted in the accepting step.

39. (Original) A method of producing a product from a plurality of elements comprising the steps of:

proposing a plurality of groups of optional elements for selection by a plurality of users;

accepting the selections of one element from every group by each user; and

producing a product for each user in accordance with the selections, respectively.

40. (Original) A method of producing a product from a plurality of elements comprising the steps of:

proposing a plurality of groups of optional elements for selection by a plurality of users;

accepting the selections of one element from every group by each user;

informing each user of the total result of the selections by the users; and

allowing each user to change the selection in view of the informed total result.

41. (Currently Amended) A data storage comprising:

a memory that stores a plurality of digital data files provided by a plurality of providers;

a recorder that records ~~the~~ a history of use by a plurality of users with respect to each of the digital data files; and

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a controller that controls a condition for each provider in storing the digital data by designating at least one of an amount of space or a number of digital data files each image provider may store in the memory in accordance with at least one of the recorder history of use by the plurality of users with respect to each of the digital data files and whether the provider has previously stored at least one digital data file in the memory.

42. (New) The image storage according to claim 24, wherein at least one of an amount of space or a number of digital images each image provider may store in the memory is based on the history of use by the plurality of image users with respect to each of the digital image data.

43. (New) The image storage according to claim 24, wherein the searcher searches the memory when the image user identifies the given condition.

44. (New) The image storage according to claim 29, wherein at least one of an amount of space or a number of digital images each image provider may store in the memory is based on the history of use by the plurality of image users with respect to each of the digital image data.